
Appendix A

BLM Instruction Memorandum 2012-044,
BLM National Greater Sage-Grouse
Land Use Planning Strategy

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240
<http://www.blm.gov/>
December 27, 2011

In Reply Refer To:
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EMS TRANSMISSION 12/27/2011
Instruction Memorandum No. 2012-044
Expires: 09/30/2013

To: All Field Officials
From: Director
Subject: BLM National Greater Sage-Grouse Land Use Planning Strategy

Program Areas: All Programs.

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum (IM) provides direction to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for considering Greater Sage-Grouse conservation measures identified in the Sage-Grouse National Technical Team's - *A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures* (Attachment 1) during the land use planning process that is now underway in accordance with the 2011 *National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy* (Attachment 2).

This IM supplements direction for Greater Sage-Grouse contained in WO IM No. 2010-071 (*Gunnison and Greater Sage-Grouse Management Guidelines for Energy Development*), the BLM's 2004 *National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy* and is a component of the 2011 *National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy* (Attachment 2). It is also consistent with WO IM No. 2011-138 (*Sage-Grouse Conservation Related to Wildland Fire and Fuels Management*).

In March 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) published its decision on the petition to list the Greater Sage-Grouse as "Warranted but Precluded." 75 Fed. Reg. 13910 (March 23, 2010). Over 50 percent of the Greater Sage-Grouse habitat is located on BLM-managed lands. In its "warranted but precluded" listing decision, FWS concluded that existing regulatory mechanisms, defined as 'specific direction regarding sage-grouse habitat, conservation, or management' in the BLM's Land Use Plans (LUPs), were inadequate to protect the species. The FWS is scheduled to make a new listing decision in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015.

The BLM has 68 land use planning units which contain Greater Sage-Grouse habitat. Based on the identified threats to the Greater Sage-Grouse and the FWS timeline for making a listing decision on this species, the BLM needs to incorporate explicit objectives and desired habitat conditions, management actions, and area-wide use restrictions into LUPs by the end of FY 2014. The BLM's objective is to conserve sage-grouse and its habitat and potentially avoid an ESA listing.

In August 2011, the BLM convened the Sage-Grouse National Technical Team (NTT), which brought together resource specialists and scientists from the BLM, State Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the FWS, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The NTT met in Denver, Colorado in August and September 2011, and in Phoenix, Arizona in December 2011, and developed a series of science-based conservation measures to be considered and analyzed through the land use planning process. This IM provides direction to the BLM on how to consider these conservation measures in the land use planning process.

In order to be effective in our ability to conserve Greater Sage-Grouse and their habitat, the BLM will continue to work with its partners including: the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), FWS, USGS, NRCS, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and Farm Services Agency (FSA) within the framework of the Sagebrush Memorandum of Understanding (2008) and the *Greater Sage-Grouse Comprehensive Conservation Strategy* (2006).

Policy/Action: The BLM must consider all applicable conservation measures when revising or amending its RMPs in Greater Sage Grouse habitat. The conservation measures developed by the NTT and contained in Attachment 1 must be considered and analyzed, as appropriate, through the land use planning process by all BLM State and Field Offices that contain occupied Greater Sage-Grouse habitat. While these conservation measures are range-wide in scale, it is expected that at the regional and sub-regional planning scales there may be some adjustments of these conservation measures in order to address local ecological site variability. Regardless, these conservation measures must be subjected to a hard look analysis as part of the planning and NEPA processes. This means that a reasonable range of conservation measures must be considered in the land use planning alternatives. As appropriate, the conservation measures must be considered and incorporated into at least one alternative in the land use planning process. Records of Decision (ROD) are expected to be completed for all such plans by the end of FY 2014. This is necessary to ensure the BLM has adequate regulatory mechanisms in its land use plans for consideration by FWS as part of its anticipated 2015 listing decision.

When considering the conservation measures in Attachment 1 through the land use planning process, BLM offices should ensure that implementation of any of the measures is consistent with applicable statute and regulation. Where inconsistencies arise, BLM offices should consider the conservation measure(s) to the fullest extent consistent with such statute and regulation.

The NTT-developed conservation measures were derived from goals and objectives developed by the NTT and included in Attachment 1. These goals and objectives are a guiding philosophy that should inform the goals and objectives developed for individual land use plans. However, it is anticipated that individual plans may develop goals and objectives that differ and are specific to individual planning areas.

Through the land use planning process, the BLM will refine Preliminary Priority Habitat and Preliminary General Habitat data (defined below) to: (1) identify Priority Habitat and analyze actions within Priority Habitat Areas to conserve Greater Sage-Grouse habitat functionality, or where possible, improve habitat functionality, and (2) identify General Habitat Areas and analyze actions within General Habitat Areas that provide for major life history function (e.g., breeding, migration, or winter survival) in order to maintain genetic diversity needed for sustainable Greater Sage-Grouse populations. Any adjustments to the NTT recommended conservation measures at the local level are still expected to meet the criteria for Priority and General Habitat Areas.

Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH): Areas that have been identified as having the highest conservation value to maintaining sustainable Greater Sage-Grouse populations. These areas would include breeding, late brood-rearing, and winter concentration areas. These areas have been/are being identified by the BLM in coordination with respective state wildlife agencies.

Preliminary General Habitat (PGH): Areas of occupied seasonal or year-round habitat outside of priority habitat. These areas have been/are being identified by the BLM in coordination with respective state wildlife agencies.

PPH and PGH data and maps have been/are being developed by the BLM through a collaborative effort between the BLM and the respective state wildlife agency, and are stored at the National Operations Center (NOC). These science-based maps were developed using the best available data and may change as new information becomes available. Such changes would be science-based and coordinated with the state wildlife agencies so that the resulting delineation of PPH and PGH provides for sustainable populations. In those instances where the BLM State Offices have not completed this delineation, the Breeding Bird Density maps developed by Doherty 2010[1] As LUPs are amended or revised, the BLM State Offices will be responsible for coordinating with the NOC to use the newest delineation of PPH and PGH. To access the PPH and PGH data, please use the following link: \\blm\dfs\loc\EGIS\OC\Wildlife\Transfers

\GREATER_SAGE_GROUSE_GIS_DATA. will be used. The NOC will establish the process for updating files to include the latest PPH and PGH delineations for each state. This information will assist in applying the conservation measures identified in Attachment 1 below.

Timeframe: This IM is effective immediately and will remain in effect until LUPs are revised or amended by the end of FY 2014.

Budget Impact: This IM will result in additional costs for coordination, NEPA review, planning, implementation, and monitoring.

Background: Following a full status review in 2005, the FWS determined that the Greater Sage Grouse was "not warranted" for protection. Decision documents in support of that determination noted the need to continue and/or expand all efforts to conserve sage-grouse and their habitats. As a result of litigation challenging the 2005 determination, the FWS revisited the determination and concluded in March 2010 that the listing of the Greater Sage-Grouse is warranted but precluded by higher priority listing actions.

In November 2004, the BLM published the *National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy*. The BLM National Strategy emphasizes partnerships in conserving Greater Sage-Grouse habitat through consultation, cooperation, and communication with WAFWA, FWS, NRCS, USFS, USGS, state fish and wildlife agencies, local sage-grouse working groups, and various other public and private partners. In addition, the *Strategy* set goals and objectives, assembled guidance and resource materials, and provided comprehensive management direction for the BLM's contributions to the ongoing multi-state sage-grouse conservation effort.

In July 2011, the BLM announced its *National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy* (Attachment 2). The goal of the *Strategy* and this IM is to review existing regulatory mechanisms and to implement new or revised regulatory mechanisms through the land use planning process to conserve and restore the Greater Sage-Grouse and their habitat. The Gunnison Sage-Grouse, bi-state population in California and Nevada and the Washington State distinct population segments of the Greater Sage-Grouse will be addressed through other policies and planning efforts.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: None.

Coordination: This IM was coordinated with the office of National Landscape Conservation System and Community Partnership (WO-170), Assistant Director, Renewable Resources and Planning, (WO-200), Minerals and Realty Management (WO-300), Fire and Aviation (WO-400), BLM State Offices, FWS and state fish and wildlife agencies.

Contact: State Directors may direct questions or concerns to Edwin Roberson, Assistant Director, Renewable Resources and Planning (WO-200) at 202-208-4896 or edwin_roberson@blm.gov; and Michael D. Nedd, Assistant Director, Minerals and Realty Management (WO-300) at 202-208-4201 or mike_nedd@blm.gov.

Signed by:
Mike Pool
Acting, Director

Authenticated by:
Ambyr Fowler
Division of IRM Governance, WO-560

2 Attachments:

- 1 - Sage-Grouse National Technical Team - *A Report on National Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Measures*, December, 2011 (74 pp)
- 2 - 2011 BLM National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy (8 pp)

[1] Doherty, K. E., J.D. Tack, J.S. Evans and D. E. Naugle. 2010. Mapping breeding densities of greater sage-grouse: A tool for range-wide conservation planning. BLM Completion Report: Interagency Agreement # L10PG00911.

Last updated: 12-28-2011

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Bureau of Land Management National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy

Charter
August 22, 2011

I. Introduction

In April 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published its listing decision for the greater sage-grouse as “Warranted but Precluded.” Inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms was identified as a major threat in the USFWS finding on the petition to list the greater sage-grouse. The USFWS has identified the principal regulatory mechanism for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as conservation measures in Resource Management Plans (RMPs). For the purpose of this document, the acronym RMP applies to all BLM land use plans. Based on the identified threats to the greater sage-grouse and the USFWS’s timeline for making a listing decision on this species, the BLM needs to incorporate explicit objectives and adequate conservation measures into RMPs within the next three years in order to conserve greater sage-grouse and avoid a potential listing under the Endangered Species Act. The planning strategy will evaluate the adequacy of BLM RMPs and address, as necessary, revisions and amendments throughout the range of the greater sage-grouse (with the exception of the Gunnison population, the bi-state population in California and Nevada, and the Washington state distinct population segment, which will all be addressed through other planning efforts).

Greater sage-grouse habitat covers 73 BLM land use planning units (not including the excepted populations noted above). Within these areas, 22 are managed under Management Framework Plans or RMPs completed before 2000 and 21 are managed under RMPs completed since 2000. Currently, the BLM has 28 plans under revision. Twenty of these plans are in the Pre-Draft stage; five are between the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); and two are between the Final EIS and the Record of Decision. In addition, BLM Wyoming is currently undertaking a programmatic EIS specific to the greater sage-grouse that will amend six completed plans and that will be incorporated into the revisions of four other plans.

II. Objective

The BLM’s objective for chartering this planning strategy effort is to develop new or revised regulatory mechanisms, through RMPs, to conserve and restore the greater sage-grouse and its habitat on BLM-administered lands on a range-wide basis over the long-term.

III. Purpose

This Charter establishes the teams, team membership and team operating procedures for the BLM's National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy.

IV. Teams – Membership, Roles and Responsibilities

A. National Policy Team

The National Policy Team (NPT) will provide overall national policy guidance throughout the planning process. The NPT members (or their official designee) are composed of the Washington Office (WO) Assistant Directors (AD) from Renewable Resources and Planning, Minerals and Realty Management, Fire and Aviation Management, and National Landscape Conservation System and Community Partnerships, Division Chiefs for Decision Support and Planning, Rangeland Resources, Fish, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Fluid Minerals, Solid Minerals, Lands, Realty and Cadastral Survey, the Manager of the Renewable Energy Coordination Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Representatives, a Director of a state fish and wildlife agency within the range of the greater sage-grouse, and the State Directors serving as the East and West Regional Management Team Leaders. The team is co-chaired by the AD for Renewable Resources and Planning, the AD for Minerals and Realty Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Deputy Regional Director Mountain-Prairie Region. The team serves as a Washington-level leadership forum to:

- Provide consistent national policy and guidance on the conservation of greater sage-grouse in the form of clear goals, objectives, and management considerations for planning.
- Oversee the development of consistent regulatory mechanisms across the range of the greater sage-grouse.
- Issue, through a national Instruction Memorandum (IM), interim direction to the field pending the completion of planning.
- Secure and allocate Bureau resources (staff and funding) to implement the national greater sage-grouse strategy.
- Ensure a direct interface between the BLM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Ensure Bureau-wide communication and coordination both internally and externally throughout the planning process.

After the initial planning effort, the NPT will continue to monitor the planning process and development of Records of Decision as well as implementation of the regulatory mechanisms.

B. National Technical Team

The National Technical Team (NTT) serves as an independent, technical and science-based team to ensure the best information related to greater sage-grouse management is fully reviewed, evaluated and provided to the BLM for consideration in the land use planning process. Non-

BLM members of the NTT serve in an advisory capacity only, and their participation does not constitute endorsement of final agency recommendations or decisions. The team lead for the NTT will be the BLM Nevada, Deputy State Director for Resources. Meetings of this team will be on an as-needed basis and at the request of either the NPT or the Regional Management Teams (RMT). Members of the NTT will be composed of subject matter experts who have extensive technical expertise in their disciplines. Members include BLM representatives from the states within the range of greater sage-grouse, the BLM's National Operations Center (NOC), Fire and Aviation Management Directorate, state wildlife agencies, other Federal agencies (such as the Agricultural Research Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey). The membership of this team is expected to vary in response to specific issues or topics which may surface during the course of the planning effort.

Consequently, NTT work is anticipated to be of short-duration and high-intensity at various stages of the planning process. Overall, the NTT will serve as a scientific and technical forum to:

- Understand current scientific knowledge related to the greater sage-grouse.
- Provide specialized sources of expertise not otherwise available.
- Provide innovative scientific perspectives concerning management approaches for the greater sage-grouse.
- Provide assurance that relevant science is considered, reasonably interpreted, and accurately presented; and that uncertainties and risks are acknowledged and documented.
- Provide science and technical assistance to the RMT and Regional Interdisciplinary Team, on request.
- Articulate conservation objectives for the greater sage-grouse in measurable terms to guide overall planning.
- Identify science-based management considerations for the greater sage-grouse (e.g., conservation measures) that are necessary to promote sustainable sage-grouse populations, and which focus on the threats in each of the management zones.

C. Regional Management Teams

The Regional Management Teams (RMT), East and West are established to reflect the uniquely different threats to the greater sage-grouse across its range. The role of the RMTs is to provide overall leadership and guidance for the planning process to ensure that adequate conservation measures are developed and incorporated into RMP amendments/ revisions. East RMT members (or their official designee) include the BLM State Directors from Wyoming (Team Leader), Montana/Dakotas, Colorado, and Utah, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Deputy Regional Director Mountain-Prairie Region, the state wildlife agency Directors for Wyoming Game and Fish, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife.

West RMT members (or their official designee) include the BLM State Directors from Nevada (Team Leader), Idaho, Oregon/Washington, California, Utah, and Montana/Dakotas, the BLM Assistant Director for Fire and Aviation Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Regional Directors Pacific Region and Pacific Southwest Region, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Deputy Regional Director Mountain-Prairie Region, the state wildlife agency Directors for the Nevada Department of Wildlife, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Fish and Game, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. These RMTs provide regional leadership forums to:

- Develop shared goals, objectives, priorities, and direction across the states and Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agency (WAFWA) management zones within the region.
- Coordinate planning, analyses, and plan implementation to ensure consistency within each WAFWA management zone across the region.
- Build regional awareness to facilitate the sharing of effective practices and strategies.
- Secure and allocate agency resources (staff and funding) across each region.
- Interface directly with the National Policy Team and the Executive Leadership Team.
- Facilitate partner engagement in the BLM planning process and foster broad collaboration for sage-grouse conservation.

The immediate focus of the RMTs for the development of RMP amendments/revisions will be as follows:

- The RMT Team Leaders will finalize RMT membership by August 31, 2011. Team Leaders may adjust RMT membership to ensure appropriate representation of federal, state or other cooperating agencies.
- Provide overall direction for initiation of the planning effort, including the establishment of sub-regional planning area boundaries by September 1, 2011.
- Evaluate the adequacy of current plans and ongoing revisions to determine the level of revision or amendment needed.
- Provide direction for a consistent Purpose and Need statement (for revisions underway, the teams should determine whether they can be synchronized with the regional effort or supplemented through the regional effort).
- Provide direction for the planning alternatives developed.
- Provide direction for analysis of the alternatives.
- Provide direction for a regional cumulative effects analysis of the plan decisions.
- Coordinate the selection of the Preferred Alternative for each Environmental Impact Statement.
- Appoint Regional Project Managers.

After the planning effort is completed, the RMTs will monitor implementation of the final plan decisions and will coordinate direction on emerging issues.

D. Regional Project Managers

The Regional Project Managers (PM) will lead the Regional Interdisciplinary Teams (RIDT) and attend sub-regional public and cooperator meetings to ensure consistency across their respective regions. The PMs will also act as advisors and consultants to their respective Regional Management Teams (RMT) and ensure that RMT direction and decisions are incorporated into the planning efforts. The PMs will call RIDT meetings, consulting with members in regard to the agendas. They will also closely monitor the planning efforts of the two regions throughout the process to maintain an appropriate level of consistency between the two regions. Additionally, the PMs may call upon Sub-regional Interdisciplinary Team members to collaborate on various issues throughout the process.

E. Regional Interdisciplinary Teams

The Regional Interdisciplinary Teams (RIDTs), East and West are also established to reflect the uniquely different threats to the great sage-grouse across its range. The primary role of the RIDTs is to ensure consistency between the Sub-regional Interdisciplinary Teams (SIDT) (e.g., use of information, data, mapping, analyses, management actions and assumptions), to the maximum extent practical. It is expected that any inconsistencies within and between regions will be based on distinct ecological differences that are recognized and supported by RIDT experts. It is expected that RIDTs would be formed at the direction of the RMTs and composed of a representative staff from the SIDTs within each of the regions. The RIDTs will propose, for Regional Management Team (RMT) approval, the mechanics for incorporating direction and policy provided by the RMTs and National Policy Team into sub-regional analyses (for RMP amendments/ revisions) to ensure consistency within WAFWA management zones across the region. For RMP amendments, this may involve similar versions of Chapter 1 (Introduction, including Purpose and Need), Chapter 2 (Proposed Action and Alternatives), and cumulative effects analyses within a region or across the range of the greater sage-grouse.

F. Sub-regional Interdisciplinary Teams

The role of the Sub-regional Interdisciplinary Teams (SIDT) is to provide the sub-regional analyses to transform goals, objectives, management planning considerations, and conservation measures into the necessary regulatory mechanisms to conserve the greater sage-grouse on BLM-administered lands within and across the respective states and WAFWA management zones within their respective regions. The SIDTs will complete the required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis (EISs) to develop the new or revised regulatory mechanisms, through RMPs, in order to conserve and restore the greater sage-grouse and its habitat on BLM-administered lands on a range-wide basis over the long term. The SIDTs will be composed of BLM staff from each of the sub-regions, as well as representatives of state wildlife agencies and the USFWS. Team members will be selected by each BLM State Office based on planning needs. The teams would generally include the Deputy State Director for Resources or a Branch Chief, and appropriate Program Leads from the BLM State Offices, as well as BLM District/ Field Office staff. These interdisciplinary teams are expected to operate collectively and separately during various stages of the planning process, as appropriate. The Regional Project Managers will provide overall leadership and direction to the SIDTs.

G. Team Operating Procedures

National Policy Team (NPT) Meetings

- The NPT will meet regularly on a schedule jointly developed by the Assistant Directors for WO-200, and WO-300. Meetings will address a wide range of topics, focusing on critical, policy related issues.
- The first meeting of the NPT will be held the week of September 5, 2011.

Regional Management Team (RMT) Meetings

- The individual RMTs will convene together in one location a minimum of two times during the year.
- Spring meetings will be held in Reno, NV (West RMT) and Cheyenne, WY (East RMT). A winter meeting will rotate among the states within each region. To the extent possible, meetings will be scheduled one year in advance.
- Regional Management Team meetings will focus on strategic issues, business issues, and the exchange of information.
- The hosting office will arrange administrative and logistical support for the Regional Management Team meetings.
- The East and West RMT leaders will chair the meetings and approve agendas. The RMT leaders will also provide an Executive Secretary to provide administrative support functions for the RMTs.
- Regional Management Team agenda items will be submitted to the Executive Secretary using a standard format. Each agenda item will have a RMT sponsor who will be responsible for the item being presented to the RMT.
- Agendas and advanced reading materials will be distributed by the Executive Secretary at least two weeks prior to each meeting.
- Meeting minutes will be summarized in sufficient detail to capture all items discussed, and recommendations, decisions, and assignments made.
- Attendance at meetings is critical and expected. When a member cannot attend, an acting member will be prepared and present with the appropriate authority to represent the member in discussions and decision making.

Regional Management Team (RMT) Conference Calls

- In the initial phases of the planning process, the East RMT conference calls will be held each Monday at 3:00 pm, Mountain Time. West RMT conference calls will be held each Thursday at 9:00 a.m., Pacific Time. The conference call schedule may be adjusted during the course of the planning process as appropriate.
- Regional Management Team Leaders will chair the meetings and approve the agenda.
- The RMT Executive Secretary will solicit agenda items and distribute agendas and advance reading materials for each conference call.
- Meeting minutes will be summarized in sufficient detail to capture all items discussed, and recommendations, decisions, and assignments made.

- Attendance at conference calls is critical and expected. When a member cannot attend, an acting member will be prepared and present with the appropriate authority to represent the member in discussions and decision making.

National Technical Team (NTT) Meetings

- The NTT meetings will focus on technical and scientific issues, and the exchange of information.
- Meetings of the NTT will be held as needed (issue or topic-based) and coordinated by the team leader (BLM Nevada, DSD for Resources). Requests for NTT meetings will be sent to the NTT leader for review and approval by either the National Policy Team or the Regional Management Teams, as appropriate. Concurrence between the East and West RMTs is required.
- Agendas and advanced reading materials will be distributed by the team leader at least one week prior to each meeting.
- Meeting minutes will be summarized in sufficient detail to capture all items discussed (including different perspectives), recommendations, and assignments made.
- Members will be allowed to review, amend and approve meeting minutes before they are finalized.
- The first meeting of the NTT will be held on August 29, 2011 in Denver, CO.

Regional Interdisciplinary Teams (RIDT) and Sub-regional Interdisciplinary Teams (SIDT)

- The Regional Project Managers in conjunction with the RIDTs and SIDTs will be responsible for establishing their own meeting and conference call schedules.
- The RIDT meetings should primarily focus on topics or issues related to consistency between the SIDTs (e.g., use of information, data, mapping, analyses, management actions and assumptions). Any identified inconsistencies between analysis areas should be addressed and an action plan developed (if necessary) to resolve or validate these inconsistencies. Inconsistencies should be documented and based on distinct ecological differences that are recognized and supported by RIDT experts.
- The SIDTs will complete the required NEPA analysis (EISs) for their respective sub-regions to develop new or revised regulatory mechanisms, through land use plans (RMPs), in order to conserve and restore the greater sage-grouse and its habitat on BLM-administered lands on a range-wide basis over the long term.

Decision Making

- Teams will operate using the consensus decision-making model. When consensus cannot be reached, the topic may be elevated to the next highest level in the organization for review and final decision. Issues will be presented to the next highest level in writing using a Decision Memo format. Issues raised will be clearly framed, will fully articulate different perspectives and will include a full range of options, solutions and desired outcomes.
- The RIDT and SIDTs do not have delegated authority for making final agency decisions. However, these teams are expected to formulate substantive recommendations for decisions which may be made by either the RMTs or the NPT. As such, the RIDT and SIDTs will use the consensus model for making their team recommendations and the same issue elevation process described above.

Consensus is a process that encourages critical discussion, leading to a broader, clearer perspective; the result is a decision constituting substantial agreement within a group. In this context, consensus is further defined as a decision whose implementation will be actively supported by all team members. In addition, consensus includes benefits of contributing to teamwork, encouraging trust, and engendering commitment from those making the decision. The person(s) who usually makes the decision must participate as an equal and accept the decision reached by the group for the process to be true consensus.

V. Funding

Funding for the Greater Sage-Grouse National Planning Strategy will be contained in the annual budget allocation supplied to each BLM State Office. The funding covers the salary for the BLM team members and includes funding to cover travel expenses for all BLM team members and State wildlife agency team members. Project planning, implementation and monitoring may be funded by existing and future program areas, initiatives and strategic funds.

VI. Charter Establishment

The establishment of the National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy is effective upon signature of the Deputy Director of Operations.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Pool", written over a horizontal line.

Mike Pool, Deputy Director of Operations

A handwritten date "8/23/2011" in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.

Date